

VZCZCXYZ0020  
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHUJA #0069/01 0211537  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
O 211537Z JAN 10  
FM AMEMBASSY ABUJA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0016  
INFO RUEHOS/AMCONSUL LAGOS IMMEDIATE 0014  
RUEHUJA/AMEMBASSY ABUJA

UNCLAS ABUJA 000069

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS  
STATE FOR AF ASSISTANT SECRETARY CARSON

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [NI](#)  
SUBJECT: SCENE-SETTER FOR FEBRUARY 6 TO 11 VISIT BY ASSISTANT  
SECRETARY CARSON

REF: ABUJA 38; ABUJA 39

1. (SBU) The U.S. Mission to Nigeria warmly welcomes the visit of Assistant Secretary for African Affairs Ambassador Carson to Nigeria to visit Lagos, Abuja, and Kano February 6 to 11. Embassy provides the following political, economic, and management information. We will transmit key messages for the trip via Septel.

-----  
RELATIONSHIP STRESSED BY RECENT EVENTS  
-----

2. (SBU) During Nigeria's fifty years of independence, the inherent strength of our bilateral relationship originated largely from the positive view that most Nigerians held of both the USG and the American people. Nigerians remain broadly sensitive to their image among Americans, and many crave international approval and respect for their perceived role as a regional and continental power. The current relationship has come under strain by the recent listing of Nigeria for aviation security purposes as a "country of interest" after the attempted bombing of a U.S. aircraft. Following a recent Federal Executive Council meeting, a Cabinet member publicly echoed the call by some Nigerian politicians to sever diplomatic ties with the U.S. due to the country's inclusion on this list. Nigerian officials and many private citizens remain angry at the designation, calling it discriminatory and unfair. The decision to put Nigeria on this list could also influence GON decisions on peacekeeping and on votes before the United Nations Security Council. Political leaders have recently toned down their rhetoric and appear to understand our concerns over outside links with extremists. Nearly all Nigerian Government (GON) leaders remain favorably disposed towards approval soon of a memorandum of understanding on air marshals. You can expect a discussion of the "country of interest" issue at most of your meetings with GON officials.

-----  
DOMESTIC ENVIRONMENT  
-----

3. (SBU) President Yar'Adua, elected in 2007 and eligible to run for a second term in 2011, has remained absent from Nigeria for nearly 60 days while undergoing medical treatment in Saudi Arabia. Vice President Goodluck Jonathan has cautiously assumed some presidential duties in the meantime, avoiding the appearance of seeking the presidency prematurely. Divisions between Northern and Southern politicians and competition among potential successors for the Vice Presidency have complicated decision-making. President Yar'Adua reportedly made several short telephone calls to selected senior officials and participated in a radio interview with the British Broadcasting Corporation.

4. (SBU) During his campaign, President Yar'Adua announced a "Seven Point Agenda" to enhance electricity generation, food security, job creation, road construction, land reform, education, and stability

in the Niger Delta. In his inaugural address, he acknowledged "flaws" in the electoral process and promised to redress them. Actions, however, have fallen short of promises. The Electoral Reform Committee (ERC) established by President Yar'Adua produced a comprehensive set of recommendations on electoral reform, but a GON paper recommended adoption of only a few of the recommendations, which have languished before the National Assembly. The February 6 gubernatorial election in the southeastern state of Anambra will present a key test of GON willingness and capability to conduct credible elections. A U.S. and the UK. assessment team has met with various civil society groups and the Independent National Election Commission (INEC) to assess Nigeria's ability to hold credible national elections in 2011.

-----  
NIGER DELTA AMNESTY  
-----

15. (SBU) The Niger Delta largely enjoys a current lull in militancy. By October, the GON persuaded all major militant leaders to renounce violence and surrender arms in exchange for amnesty, government stipends, training opportunities, and pledges greater development for the Delta. Nigerian officials have followed up the amnesty program with a series of consultations with Delta stakeholders, including ex-militants. United Nations Development Program (UNDP) partners sent a letter to Minister of Defense and Amnesty Committee Chairperson Retired General Godwin Abbe in December offering to engage on the Niger Delta, but has yet to receive a reply. Concerns exist that full implementation of rehabilitation programs may not occur before ex-militants become

impatient. To date, security improved considerably in most areas of the Delta, but ex-militants staged protests in Bayelsa, Rivers, and Delta States over lack of progress on rehabilitation and reintegration.

16. (SBU) During the past six months, the GON has undertaken a few modest steps against corruption. In August, for example, Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Governor Sanusi Lamido Sanusi ordered the audit of Nigeria's 24 banks. Two rounds of audits led to a 3.9 billion-dollar bailout of eight troubled banks, replacement of top bankers, publication of a "name and shame" list of hundreds of bad debtors, and recovery to date of ten percent of the bad debt. In late October, a Nigerian judge convicted the former Nigerian Port Authority chairperson on various corruption charges and ordered his immediate imprisonment for up to eight years. Many perpetrators of corruption, however, appear to possess little or no fear of punishment for their offenses.

17. (SBU) The State Department designated Nigeria in 2009 as a "Category One" country for its efforts against trafficking in persons thanks to the work of the Nigerian Agency for the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons. The Nigerian Drug and Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) agreed to accept assignment of a law enforcement advisor at its headquarters to provide technical assistance. The Mission witnessed some progress on long-standing extradition cases.

18. (SBU) On trade and development, Mission efforts have led to the elimination of import bans and decreases in tariffs on key products, decreasing the cost of doing business and reducing incentives for smuggling. The Mission helped the GON solve regulatory and policy problems to allow increased electricity supplies, boost agricultural production, and help establish reliable regional and international markets, including use of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA). The Mission has also worked toward a healthy restructuring of the oil and gas sector, and toward improving aviation safety and security. During the past year, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has provided technical assistance to the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA) in preparation for an FAA flight safety audit.

19. (SBU) Bilateral military cooperation remains strong. The third African Partnership Station (APS) deployment in the last two years will occur in February. U.S. contractors installed Regional Maritime Awareness Capability (RMAC) radar sites in Lagos and Bonny Island, and the Mission is helping to stand up a military

counter-terrorism unit. Nigerian troops participated in peacekeeping operations in Darfur and Liberia with the help of Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance (ACOTA). The GON remains interested in working closely with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to promote regional security where needed.

-----  
CHALLENGES  
-----

¶10. (SBU) Important legislation affecting the petroleum industry and oil and gas services remain under consideration by the National Assembly. The proposed Petroleum Industry Bill (PIB) and Local Content Bill would respectively affect GON relationships with international oil and gas production and service companies operating in Nigeria. Depending on their ultimate content, they could affect the willingness of foreign companies to make new investments in Nigeria in the oil and gas sector.

¶11. (SBU) Lower oil prices and more "shut-in" oil production in the Niger Delta, beginning in late 2008, lowered GON revenues. Off-setting this trend, accession by militants to the amnesty program allowed production to rebound from an estimated 1.6 million barrels per day in August 2009 to 2.0 million barrels per day in December 2009, with the prospect of as much as 2.4 million barrels per day by mid-2010. The GON offset the decline in revenue in 2008 and 2009 by drawing down the Excess Crude Account to fund the National Integrated Power Project and distribute additional funds to national, state, and municipal governments. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth is expected to have declined from 6.4 percent during 2008 to something above 3.0 percent during 2009, according to the latest IMF estimates. Meanwhile, total foreign exchange reserves declined from 63 billion dollars in August 2008 to 43 billion dollars at the end 2009, while the Excess Crude Account declined from 20 billion dollars in January 2009 to 6.5 billion dollars at year's end. The decline in both foreign exchange reserves and the Excess Crude Account may stabilize given the steady recovery of both oil prices and oil production in 2009.

¶12. (SBU) In the north, violent clashes erupted in four states in

July 2009 after supporters of an Islamic extremist group, "Boko Haram," attacked police stations and other government facilities provoking police and military sweeps in several states suspected to harbor "Boko Haram" members and sympathizers. The group opposes western education models. Nigeria's Islamic leaders strongly condemned the attacks. The Nigerian army restored order, but clashes between security forces and militants reportedly resulted in about 700 deaths. The leader of this group died while in police custody, and many "Boko Haram" members remain incarcerated or outside public view.

¶13. (SBU) A separate outbreak of violence occurred in Bauchi State in December 2009 after local residents expressed concern to authorities about aggressive, open-air preaching by members of an Islamic sect known as "Maitatsine" or "Kala Kato." Sect members reportedly questioned the July crackdown by security forces on Boko Haram members and criticized others, possibly including members of their own sect. Security personnel responded to the scene and quelled the violence, but clashes resulted in an estimated 40 deaths. Security officials said they arrested 20 individuals, and claimed to have killed the sect's leader recovered bomb-making tools and explosives. In mid-January, communal violence erupted again in Jos, causing numerous deaths, considerable damage to property, and displacement of thousands of residents. The GON ordered deployment of military and police units to Jos to restore order.

¶14. (SBU) In December 2009, Nigerian national Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab allegedly attempted to detonate an explosive device on a U.S. commercial airliner shortly before landing at Detroit's international airport. Nigeria's Muslim community roundly condemned Abdulmutallab's reported actions in unconditional and unequivocal terms. Several Muslim organizations issued public statements condemning violence as "un-Islamic," emphasizing Islam

as a religion of peace, and voicing concern that this incident has harmed Nigeria's image and interests.

-----  
MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES  
-----

¶15. (SBU) The Mission faces a broad array of management challenges exacerbated by the constraints of operating in a Nigerian environment and by recurring recruitment difficulties, especially at the mid-level.

¶16. (SBU) Lack of office space remains a critical challenge. The Overseas Building Office (OBO) dedicated the New Embassy Compound (NEC) in 2005 after "de-scoping" the Chancery building because of insufficient funds to complete the building as originally envisioned. The building's office space did not provide for reasonable Mission growth, much less the growth that the Mission has experienced during the last five years. The Chancery lacks a multi-purpose room for public and Mission community events; a cafeteria/restaurant, despite a dearth of dining facilities in the vicinity; and a gym for U.S. and Locally Engaged Staff. The Embassy community attempts to compensate with a canteen operating out of cobbled-together shipping containers. Similarly, the Embassy's LES members and contract workers must use converted shipping containers to change into work uniforms. The Chancery has numerous shortcomings, including a single, one-lane, main entry control point that results in the back up of Embassy vehicular traffic on both sides of the main entryway, a poorly-calibrated electrical system that requires the Embassy to run constantly on generators to protect sensitive equipment, and a poorly installed roof that must already be replaced. The GAO previously characterized the Abuja NEC as model case for how not to build a NEC. We would agree.

-----  
USAID NEW ANNEX PROJECT  
-----

¶17. (SBU) When State Department and other agency personnel moved to the NEC in 2005, USAID became the primary occupant of the Old Embassy Compound, an assemblage of leased properties, until a New Annex Project (NOX) at the NEC could be completed to accommodate USAID. The NOX, originally scheduled for completion in 2006, met with repeated delays. OBO finally terminated the contract in December 2009 for the contractor's failure to perform, and the contract will need to be re-solicited with a revised scope of work. This process will be lengthy, and we are urging OBO to expand the scope to meet Mission needs.

¶18. (SBU) The NOX is designed for an office capacity of 105 persons, but USAID already has 140 authorized positions and

projects office staff needs for 2011 at 155 positions. (Note: Throughout the Mission, we have zero growth and cannot approve additional NSDD-38 slots for key policy and programming needs. End Note). The NOX's scope should be significantly expanded to accommodate USAID and other Mission needs, including a multi-purpose room, professional kitchen, cafeteria, gym, and so forth. Additionally, if the NOX's modest cafeteria were to be significantly redesigned, it could serve the cafeteria needs of the entire NEC community as well as provide space for an after-hours American Club. As the leases expire on the Old Embassy Compound (OEC) in 2010, and the NOX, in whatever future configuration, is still years from completion, USAID has been forced to take under provisional lease the "Dumez" building, which needs a collocation waiver and substantial security renovations but could provide a professional office facility.

¶19. (SBU) The Consulate General is undergoing a major rehabilitation project due for completion in 2011. The project will harden the Consular area and allow the Public Diplomacy Section to move its operations from office space on Lagos Island. The project, however, does not address several key needs, such as replacing windows that fall out, renovating decrepit bathrooms which do not comply with American Disabilities Act provisions, replacing all electrical systems, and providing blast protection

for facility occupants.

¶20. (SBU) Security concerns dominate "quality of life" issues in both Abuja and Lagos. Travel outside Lagos and Abuja requires RSO approval and is generally not recommended for pleasure trips. Security costs for the Mission remain high as we must pay per diem for Mobile Police (MOPOL) escorts on trips and the high cost of fuel. Travel outside of the Lagos islands generally requires use of an armored vehicle and sometimes escorts by armed MOPOL. Fares for commercial to and from Nigeria are expensive. With the high cost of goods and services in Nigeria, the ability of Mission staff to go out and experience what little is available is extremely limited, which adversely affects morale and recruitment. We have dynamic Community Liaison Offices (CLO) in both Abuja and Lagos after experiencing nearly 18 months prior with no full-time CLO in either location.

-----  
SECURITY  
-----

¶21. (SBU) Mission Nigeria has a critical threat rating for violent crime. Criminals with firearms target both Nigerians and foreigners, and have repeatedly shown a willingness to indiscriminately use their weapons. Security constraints complicate Mission operations and have a deleterious impact on Mission morale. In Lagos, all official movements must occur with armored vehicles. Night-time movements require an armed police escort. In Abuja, travel outside the capital's ring road is generally prohibited after 2100 hours because of increased risk of armed robbery or assault. In 2006, assailants robbed an Embassy Motor Pool driver and passenger at gun point on the airport road. Airport travel between 2100 and 2300 hours requires an armed police escort; travel to/from the airport is generally prohibited from 2300 to 0530 hours.

¶22. (SBU) The Mission, other diplomatic missions, and many expatriates in Nigeria have suffered from violent armed robberies, both via attacks in public places and via home invasions. In March 2008, assailants shot and wounded a Marine Security Guard (MSG) during a home invasion at the Lagos MSG residence. Also in 2008, armed intruders attempted several times to enter the Consul General's residential compound. On June 11, 2009, armed intruders shot and killed an Embassy Abuja contract security guard at an Embassy residential compound. The intruders attempted to break into one of the houses, and the occupant activated the security alarm siren. They left after the alarm was activated and a react team was en route to the compound.

¶23. (SBU) On November 18, 2009, six to eight armed intruders breached a security wall at a separate Embassy Abuja residential compound. They restrained the guards and brutalized on-compound domestic staff. They attempted to break into one house and the occupant activated the "panic" alarm. The intruders tried to disable the alarm with five AK-47 shots into the exterior wall of the resident's safe haven, but missed. They continued with their break-in, opened an exterior security grill, and entered the residence. They then began excavating the mortar anchoring the safe-haven security grill. They continued their demolition work until the React Team arrived, at which time they fired two shots at the react team and withdrew the way they entered over the compound wall.

-----  
STAFFING NEEDS  
-----

¶24. (SBU) Mission Nigeria has expanded to the point where it is one of the three largest Missions in sub-Saharan Africa. Considerable pressure and ample justification exist for all agencies at post to grow further. Post, however, has been forced to freeze Mission staffing, except for recent approval of a regional counter-terrorism position (to be handled outside ICASS) after the December 25 attempted attack on a U.S. airliner, due to the lack of available office space, housing, and adequate staffing in Management to support current operations, much less additional Mission growth. The Mission has added some LES Management



positions, but needs more, which would be imprudent without receiving more U.S. Direct Hire (USDH) staff to supervise them. The Mission has tremendous challenges in maintaining internal controls and managing LES performance and conduct. There are signs that the Mission will receive soon another MSP-requested General Services Officer (GSO) position in Abuja, and OBO is considering the Mission's long-standing request to add another Facilities Management position. The Regional Security Office (RSO) may have prospects of adding another Assistant RSO position.

¶25. (SBU) Most Mission agencies and all State Department sections face serious challenges in recruiting able personnel to fill their USDH positions. The Mission's inadequate facilities, concerns over the working environment, living-space conditions, limited in-country personal travel options, the limitations of the American International School, a very difficult host country operational environment, and the challenges of managing local staff effectively discourage many prospective bidders. These concerns, combined with the critical threat security environment and heavy work load because of the limited staff coverage for the range of responsibilities, make it all the more difficult to staff the Mission.

-----  
CONCLUSION  
-----

¶26. (SBU) While the December 25 attempted attack on a commercial airliner has complicated bilateral relations, we continue to promote key priorities on Electoral Reform, the Niger Delta and Regional Security, Anti-Corruption, and Energy and Investment. President Yar'Adua's prolonged absence from the country continues to affect domestic government operations and relations with the international community. A less than credible election in 2011 could seriously harm interests here. Meanwhile, we should not lose sight of the long-term challenge of working with Nigerian partners on numerous shared interests, including deterring or treating HIV/AIDS (PEPFAR funding is about 1.5 billion dollars), addressing educational needs, and enhancing law enforcement and counter-terrorism capacities.

¶27. (U) Embassy and ConGen Lagos collaborated on this telegram.  
SANDERS